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San Diego Launches Successful Program Putting the Long-Term Unemployed Back to Work

San Diego Workforce Partnership with the support of AARP Foundation, Citi Community Development and Walmart Foundation expand the Platform to Employment program created by The WorkPlace.

Members of the press are welcome to cover the announcement with program partners today, April 17, at 2 p.m. at the South Metro Career Center, 4389 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA 92113.

San Diego, CA (April 17, 2013) – The WorkPlace and the San Diego Workforce Partnership, with the support of AARP Foundation, Citi Community Development and the Walmart Foundation, announce the expansion of the highly successful Platform to Employment (P2E) program. San Diego is one of the first sites across the country that will replicate P2E in 2013. The program creates a pathway to employment for the long-term unemployed. With 4.6 million Americans unemployed for 27 weeks or longer in March, long-term unemployment remains a significant concern to reviving the American economy and strengthening our communities.

P2E, which began in southwestern Connecticut, addresses the specific needs of unemployed workers over 50 and military veterans. The program is a proven model that demonstrates that the right job readiness programming, combined with personal and family support services and financial counseling, can return the long-term unemployed to the workforce. Tested in multiple cohorts, including participants from urban and suburban communities, P2E has placed 80% of program participants into work experience programs, with nearly 90% of these individuals moving on to full-time employment.

AARP Foundation will provide a grant to specifically recruit and serve long-term unemployed workers who are over 50 years of age. This population continues to spend longer periods of time looking for work and securing a stable income. AARP Foundation is working to reverse the downward spiral that many older Americans and their families face.

"Today, Americans 50+ face choices and pressures no one could have prepared for," said Jo Ann Jenkins, AARP Foundation President. "Job loss and long-term unemployment among those 50 and older have wiped out retirements savings and caused any hopes of a secure financial future to fade. AARP Foundation is pleased to support the expansion of Platform to Employment to help put people 50+ back to work in good jobs in their communities and pave the way to a brighter and more secure future."

With support from Citi Community Development, P2E participants will receive financial counseling and credit rebuilding assistance so they are better equipped to face the significant financial challenges many families confront

during extended periods of unemployment. Financial counseling will be provided by Community Housing Works. This training is essential at a time when many are financially overextended and have endured a reduction in regular income, or have none at all. "Today, we offer a salute as San Diego joins nine other cities across the country where the long-term unemployed, including our veterans and seniors, will benefit from the truly innovative Platform to Employment program," said Gustavo Bidart, Citi's Southern California Regional Director of Community Development.

With additional support from the Walmart Foundation, P2E will provide services to veterans, with a deliberate focus on including women veterans, returning to the civilian workforce in San Diego as well as the subsequent replication sites. The unemployment rate for veterans has remained much higher than the national average, as service members returning from Afghanistan and Iraq have struggled to find work.

In addition to career opportunities for veterans and military families, Walmart recently announced that over the next five years, it will hire 100,000 veterans who honorably left the military in the last year. Walmart is already the largest private employer of veterans in the country. The program, which will start on Memorial Day, will include jobs mostly in Walmart stores or Sam's Club locations.

"As one of the nation's largest private employers of veterans and those on active duty, we share The WorkPlace's vision of a country where every veteran has a chance to succeed economically and support his or her family," said retired U.S. Army Brigadier General Gary Profit, senior director of military programs at Walmart. "Walmart is committed to making that vision a reality by supporting organizations and programs that provide job and skills training to our veterans. These young men and women stood up for us, and now it's our turn to stand up for them."

Platform to Employment offers a five week preparatory program which includes workshops on resume writing, interview preparation, self-marketing and other skills. Additionally, each participant and their family have access to behavioral health services and counseling. Following the preparatory program, P2E helps participants find open positions with local employers who have job openings. P2E enables employers to have a risk free evaluation of participants during an eight week trial period where wages are subsidized by the program.

"Here in San Diego, we know that jobseekers feel like they're at the end of their ropes," says Mark Nanzer, who funds the public career center network with the San Diego Workforce Partnership. "I'm excited about this program, which will remind jobseekers in our region that they are not alone."

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About The WorkPlace

The WorkPlace conducts comprehensive planning, and coordinates regional workforce development policy and programs to prepare people for careers while strengthening the workforce for employers. As national leader in the field, The WorkPlace regularly shares ideas and best practices with lawmakers, foundations, think tanks and other workforce development organizations around the country. For more information, visit www.workplace.org or <http://www.platformtoemployment.com>

About AARP Foundation

AARP Foundation is working to win back opportunity for struggling Americans 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today: housing, hunger, income and isolation. By coordinating responses to these issues on all four fronts at once, and supporting them with vigorous legal advocacy, the Foundation serves the unique needs of those 50+ while working with local organizations nationwide to reach more people, work more efficiently and make resources go further. AARP Foundation is AARP's affiliated charity. Learn more at www.aarpfoundation.org.

About Citi Community Development

Citi Community Development (CCD) is leading Citi's commitment to achieve economic empowerment and growth for underserved individuals, families and communities by expanding access to financial products and services, and

building sustainable business solutions and innovative partnerships. Our focus areas include: commercial and philanthropic funding; innovative financial products and services; and collaborations with institutions that expand access to financial products and services for low-income and underserved communities. For more information, visit www.citicommunitydevelopment.com.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts. By operating globally and giving back locally, Walmart is uniquely positioned to address the needs of the communities it serves and make a significant social impact within its core areas of giving: Hunger Relief and Nutrition, Sustainability, Career Opportunity and Women's Economic Empowerment. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are leading the fight against hunger in the United States with a \$2 billion commitment through 2015. Walmart has donated more than 900 million meals to those in need across the country. To learn more about Walmart's giving, visit foundation.walmart.com

About San Diego Workforce Partnership

San Diego Workforce Partnership funds job training programs that enable eligible adults to develop the skills and knowledge needed for emerging career opportunities within such fields as green jobs, healthcare, and clean technology. <http://workforce.org/>

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